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The President's Daily Brief

November 26, 1974

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category, 5B(1),(2),(3)
declassified only on approval of
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USSR

The Soviets appear to be pleased with the Vladivostok summit. General Secretary Brezhnev gave it pride of place in a major speech he delivered earlier today in Mongolia. Commentaries in the media have carried high praise for the results--particularly progress on arms limitations--and have implied that you and Brezhnev got along well personally.

Brezhnev said that his talks with you had confirmed and developed detente further. He specifically noted the accord to conclude "in the nearest months" work on a mutually acceptable new agreement to limit strategic weapons.

Pravda ran the joint communiqué on its front page yesterday, and also carried the Soviet-American statement on SALT. Another mass-circulation newspaper reported "great progress" toward a new arms control agreement, and stated that cooperation has become the political norm between the two sides.

A speaker on a weekly radio roundtable in Moscow described the summit as one of the most important events of the decade. He noted also "how fruitful have been the personal contacts between the leaders." According to a Tass correspondent, the talks are being universally acclaimed as a major step forward in international relations.

On the cautionary side, commentators continue to point to the efforts of "certain circles" in the US to block normalization of US-Soviet trade, although Pravda reported on November 22 that the Senate Finance Committee had approved the trade bill.

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ISRAEL-EGYPT-SYRIA

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PALESTINIANS

Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasir Arafat arrived in Moscow yesterday, almost certainly hoping to elicit more vigorous Soviet backing for Palestinian political goals. Arafat will probably have his first publicly acknowledged meeting with Brezhnev when the party boss returns from Mongolia later this week.

The Soviets will welcome Arafat's visit in view of their intensified efforts to establish a direct role for themselves in Middle East diplomacy. They seem likely to offer more explicit recognition to the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians in view of the backing Arafat and the PLO won at the Arab summit in Rabat and at the UN. The Soviets, however, are expected to:

--avoid giving Arafat a blanket endorsement;

--caution him against repeating more extravagant demands;

--stress that they recognize Israel's right to exist.

Arafat's trip to Moscow comes on the heels of his visits to Cuba and seven Arab states, and will probably be followed by at least one stop in Eastern Europe. This round of visits is aimed at maintaining what Arafat sees as steadily building momentum toward wider international recognition of Palestinian rights.

* * *

This effort to increase international sympathy for the Palestinian cause seemed threatened over the weekend by the hijacking of the British Airways airliner from Dubai to Tunis. Prompt condemnation of the incident by Arafat appears, however, to have minimized the repercussions for the PLO, which is adhering to its policy of condemning international terrorism while condoning or approving strikes directly at Israel.

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The hijacking--carried out by radical fedayeen elements that have in the past operated from Libya and Iraq--was the first directed against an Arab state other than Jordan. It was immediately condemned by virtually all Arab governments, including Libya and Iraq.

The ultimate fate of the hijackers is still unsettled. The PLO, the Tunisian government, and the other Arabs are united in claiming the hijackers should be forced to "pay the price," although none will be eager to shoulder responsibility for their trial or detention.

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OIL SUMMIT

The Algerians have succeeded in shifting the next meeting of OPEC, scheduled for December 12, from Vienna to Algiers [redacted] 25X1

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They also want a meeting of oil price experts just prior to the OPEC session and a joint meeting of energy and foreign ministers following the December meeting. The ministers would prepare for an oil producers summit next January.

The US embassy in Algiers has learned that Iran and some other oil producers supported the Algerian proposal for a change of venue. As the organizers of the conference, the Algerians will be in a better position to influence its decisions and thus more effectively oppose any significant reductions in the price of oil.

According to the US embassy, the Algerians' principal goals for the meetings are to:

--maintain high oil prices;

--link these prices to an industrial goods price index;

--recycle surplus oil revenues first to Arab states and then to developing countries;

--blame the oil companies for the current high prices.

Algeria depends on oil revenues to finance its ambitious development program and cannot in the near term increase production significantly to earn more income. Algiers has come to believe that, until sales of its natural gas increase further, the best way to augment its revenues is to link the price of oil to the cost of industrial imports.

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ETHIOPIA

The ruling military council has placed all armed forces and police on increased alert to forestall any reaction to the mass executions last weekend.

There have been no disturbances or unusual movements in Addis Ababa since the executions. A serious split may, however, be developing between the council and military units in the field who complain that the council failed to consult them. These units may demand that they be allowed to send new representatives to the council--a move their present representatives will probably resist.

Asmara, the capital of Eritrea Province, also is reported normal, although uneasy over the council's decision to send reinforcements to fight insurgents there. General Aman had favored a peaceful solution to the insurgency. 25X1

Whatever prompted the executions- [redacted] 25X1 [redacted] the arbitrary 25X1 nature of the killings, and the council's refusal to let relatives claim the bodies, has probably alienated many segments of the population who had generally supported the council.

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TURKEY

Former prime minister Ecevit is reported to be negotiating again with the rightist Democratic Party in an effort to form a coalition that would return him to power.

The proposed nonpartisan government of Sadi Irmak has come under fire from all sides and faces an uphill battle to obtain the necessary parliamentary vote of confidence later this week. Ecevit's party and the Democrats hold a slim majority in the national assembly, sufficient to seal the fate of the Irmak government. Little effort would then be needed to persuade President Koruturk to tap Ecevit again to form a government.

The armed forces continue to favor Ecevit and have begun to press civilian politicians to resolve their differences as Turkey enters its third month of caretaker government. Senior officers do not favor direct intervention in the political process, but there are increasing signs that junior officers may push for action if the impasse continues much longer. Student unrest has grown since Ecevit left office, and this too is likely to encourage military and civilian leaders to end the stalemate.

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CHINA

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NOTES

Japan: Leaders of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party are now discussing the method by which they will choose a successor to Prime Minister Tanaka, who announced his resignation this morning. The method will affect the chances of the two leading contenders, former finance minister Fukuda and Finance Minister Ohira. If the party cannot decide between the two, it may designate party vice president Shiina to head a caretaker government until elections are held in July. The party will almost certainly reach a decision before mid-December, when the Diet reconvenes. Whoever the choice, he is not likely to make changes in Japanese policy that would affect close relations with the US.

USSR: Final preparations are under way for the launch of a manned Soyuz spacecraft. 25X1

that the launch is scheduled for Thursday, but it could be delayed. The purpose of the mission probably will be to check out techniques and equipment to be used in the July 1975 joint Apollo-Soyuz flight, especially the environmental control and docking systems. The Soviet crew for the upcoming flight reportedly will be the backup team for the joint mission.

United Nations: The General Assembly's political committee has suspended consideration of the Korean issue until the Cambodian debate is concluded. General Assembly President Bouteflika and other supporters of Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk have been pressing for an early debate on Cambodia to capitalize on the momentum created by recent Third World victories. The vote--essentially who should represent Cambodia--is expected tomorrow or the next day and should be close.

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